

Our Hope of Glory

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Scriptures:

James 1:12

Hebrews 12:1-2

Revelation 3:11

Psalm 16:8

The word "perseverance" comes from two Latin words "per", meaning through, and "severus" meaning strict or earnest; together as one word, the meaning becomes going through whatever is happening with earnestness, with strictness of purpose.

In thinking about how this is applied in our lives, I realised that I have shied away from the word itself because it has quite negative connotations for me. As a child I was always afraid of doing the wrong thing, of not measuring up to what I thought was expected of me. I now know that this resulted in setting myself unachievable goals, albeit unintentionally at the time, that I kept persevering to reach. My nose was constantly to the grindstone, perseverance was almost soul destroying.

Yet, for followers of Jesus the Christ, perseverance is the complete opposite. It means keeping our eyes firmly fixed on Him, seeing before us the Hope of Glory, all the while knowing that God is faithfully holding us, faithfully guiding and directing us. It is knowing that we are loved, valued and treasured by God despite the heartaches, the distractions and the turmoil that life on this earth can often throw at us.

James writes *"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."* What a difference to my youthful misunderstanding and angst ridden concept of perseverance.

When Jesus was nailed to Calvary's cross, His way of maintaining the perseverance needed for submitting Himself to that degradation was to keep focussed on the joy that was set before Him. He placed His trust firmly in the promise of seeing the salvation of all who believe in Him, the promise of seeing His Bride. So it must be for us, to always have before us the joy of our salvation, seeing that glorious victory that has been won for us.

This year, 2020, will surely go down in history as a time of dreadful pain, loss, fear, hopelessness and confusion. As well as a time when the old values of care, kindness and looking out for our neighbour were brought to the fore, threads of pure gold in a dark canvas. I was born a few years after the end of WW2. I saw the evidence of what the bombing during the war had done to the town where I lived, but I didn't live through it. I heard the stories of how people kept on going, persevering because they hoped that one day it would end, one day the bombing would cease, one day there would be no more food shortages. This year, 2020, is a stark reminder of those dark days, but also a reminder of the power of hope, not just any nebulous hope, but the sure and

steadfast Hope of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Hope that makes perseverance possible.

I am learning each day more about the wonder and the all surpassing joy of what Christ bought for me at Calvary. And, as a consequence of this learning, perseverance has taken on a whole new dimension. It is no longer a nose to the grindstone, gritting my teeth journey. The perseverance I now seek to accomplish is entwined and encircled in the assurance of God's never failing love, His never wavering faithfulness, His constant presence with me, His steadfast promise that I am His.

Perseverance is giving thanks in all things, it is rejoicing in God through all situations, it is placing our tiny mustard seed of faith in His almighty hand and seeing it multiply. The fuel for perseverance is Jesus Christ our Hope of Glory.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for placing within us Your Holy Spirit who guides us, teaches us, comforts and sustains us no matter what we are going through. Thank You for teaching us to persevere by keeping our eyes on You, in Jesus Name we give thanks, Amen.

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